

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully solicited.

Claims 5-8 are now pending in the application, with Claims 5 and 7 being independent. Claims 1-4 have been cancelled without prejudice, and Claim 5 has been amended herein.

Applicants thank the Examiner for his indication that Claims 7 and 8 are allowable. Claims 7 and 8 have not been amended herein, thus remaining in condition for allowance.

Claims 5 and 6 were objected to. Claim 5 has been rewritten in independent form herein. Accordingly, independent Claim 5 is also believed to be in condition for allowance. Dependent Claim 6 depends from Claim 5, and is, too, believed to be allowable.

Claim 1 was rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over Claim 12 of copending Application No. 10/687,813. Claim 1 has been cancelled herein, thus rendering this rejection moot.

Claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over U.S. Patent No. 5,160,969 (Mizuma et al.) in view of Japanese Patent Document No. 11-2961 (Kashiwabara et al.). Claims 1-4 have been cancelled, and the remaining claims are believed to be in condition for allowance for the reasons noted above. The foregoing actions have been taken without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and without conceding correctness of the rejections, but rather strictly to obtain an earlier allowance and to expedite issuance.

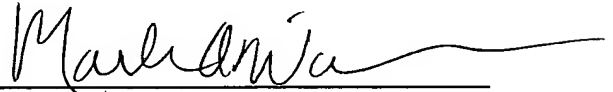
For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention is patentably defined by Claims 5-8.

This Amendment After Final Rejection does not raise new issues, is an earnest attempt to advance prosecution and reduce the number of issues, and is believed to clearly place this application in condition for allowance. This Amendment was not earlier presented because Applicants earnestly believed that the prior Amendment placed the subject application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, entry of this Amendment under 37 CFR 1.116 is respectfully requested.

Applicants submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowability are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mark A. Williamson', written over a horizontal line.

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